

G7

reasons for visiting Groningen



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What is it exactly that makes Groningen the city it is? Explore the real Groningen with the Groningen 7, a selection of places of interest to help visitors explore the various sights of the city and province.

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Groningen estate houses

In former centuries, Groningen estate houses were the magnificent country seats of local nobility. They usually originated as stone houses; a simple defence work from the 14th or 15th century with thick walls where farmers could flee in times of danger.

Fraeylemaborg

The first bricks of the Fraeylemaborg Groningen estate house were laid prior to 1300. Through the centuries, it has developed from an austere stone house into a little 'French castle' with an elegant tower, moat and magnificent.



Menkemaborg

This prominent estate house is designed in an 18th-century style with a rich interior which partly comes from other Groningen estate houses. It is located on a spacious area with moats, gardens, boulevards, drive way and rosarium.

Verhildersum

The Groningen estate house with its boulevards, gardens and moats is the very centre of the country estate. After various renovations, the current building can be compared to the longhouse from the fifteenth and sixteenth century.

Lauwersmeer National Park

The Lauwersmeer National Park is ideal for walking, cycling and sailing. With a rich and varied flora and fauna, this is the favourite location for bird-watchers. Visits can be perfectly combined with an excursion to the island of Schiermonnikoog.

A true paradise for water sports fans



The Lauwersmeer National Park is ideal for water sports fans: sailing, canoeing, kite surfing; anything is possible in this untouched area with plenty of space for everyone. Moor your boat in one of the four marinas at the Lauwersmeer Lake: the Lunegat, in Dokkumer Nieuwe Zijlen, the marinas in Oostmahorn or Zoutkamp, or the harbour at Lauwersoog.

The lake has a number of recreational jetties and some islands where sailing fans can anchor.

Hiking and bicycle tours

Various hiking and bicycle tours haven been set out in the Lauwersmeergebied. The Tourist Information Offices provide various folders, the most beautiful of which are marked. Walks are 50 kilometres, and the longest bicycle tour is 45 kilometres and runs around the Lauwersmeer

Zoutkamp

In addition to beautiful scenic areas, the bicycle paths take in characteristic villages such as Zoutkamp. Fish trade used to draw many people to the village; this was one of the places from which fishing boats set out to sea. Before 1969, the Lauwersmeer Lake was the Lauwerszee Sea and had an open connection with the Wadden Sea. In the Visserijmuseum (Fishery Museum) located in Zoutkamp at the water, they know all about it.



If you walk down the quay from the museum for a couple of minutes, you will see the 'face of Zoutkamp': multicoloured buildings with the Paling Rokerij (eel smokehouse) which sells delicious fresh fish – a perfect and healthy lunch tip for cyclists stopping in Zoutkamp.

Reitdiep

The Reitdiep runs from the city of Groningen to the village of Zoutkamp at the Lauwersmeer Lake. The meandering De Hunze river (currently Reitdiep) is one of the oldest man-made landscapes in Europe. There are various beautiful walking and cycling routes along the Reitdiep.

Schiermonnikoog

The ferry to the island of Schiermonnikoog departs from Lauwersoog. The greater part of this Wadden Island is a National Park, so this is where you find tranquillity and space. There are wonderful options for cycling, hiking, letting the wind blow through your hair on the extensive North Sea beach or swimming in the sea. Hotel van der Werf is located in the village. The marina is a tidal harbour and, depending on the boat, can be reached two hours before and two hours after high tide.



Pieterburen

The location of Lenie 't Hart's seal sanctuary, the village of Pieterburen is also the starting point for many hikers that come here for a walk across the mud flats or the first stretch of the Pieterpad trail.

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Seal sanctuary

Pieterburen is known for its Lenie 't Hart's Zeehondencreche (seal sanctuary) where, for almost forty years, sick seals and seals washed ashore are taken care of, with the ultimate goal to release them back into the wild. The seal sanctuary has a visitors' centre where the treatment and care of seals can be seen from up close.



Walking across the mud flats

At low tide, the Wadden area can be seen from up close when for a few hours it is possible to walk across the uncovered mud flats. This provides an opportunity to explore the vast plains until the rising water washes away the fresh footsteps.

Domies Toen

At the foot of the Pieterburen church is a wonderfully laid out botanic garden, which used to belong to a vicar. There are walking routes taking in the flowering plants and a tearoom.



Bourtange

Travel back into time through east Groningen where the Bourtange fortress has stood still in time and where the ancient cannon booms as it did in the year 1742. Take a ride with the old locomotive on the Museumspoorlijn (Museum Railway Line) and visit the Ter Apel monastery to see how the Crutched Friars lived.

Past and present

The sixteen lime trees at the W. Lodewijkstraat 33 have witnessed history as they have been standing in the Bourtange fortress for 350 years. Thanks to its careful reconstruction, everyone can see what took place in the neighbourhood of these trees. It looks almost like it did in the year 1742. The construction of the fortress was initiated in 1580, but reached its full magnitude in 1742.

The pentagonal shape of the fortress was designed as the ancient and original plan prescribed. Using old drawings and maps, the image from the history books came to life in the entire vicinity, not in the least because cannons are fired on a regular basis. This used to happen a lot; situated on a sand ridge used by traffic between Germany and the city of Groningen, Bourtange was a strategic location. The rest of the area consisted mainly of impassable marshes. Bourtange has other interesting places of interest in addition to the cannon: there are the officer houses, soldier barracks, the gunpowder storage, a sinister instrument of torture, etc. There are regular events and guided tours, and visitors can spend the night in a box bed in one of the soldier or captain lodging houses. There is a honeymoon suite for newlyweds who just have said 'I do' in the Nieuwe Kruithuis in Bourtange, for instance.



Terps

Terps are artificial hillocks made by human hands. The Het Hoogeland open-air museum in Warffum shows a terp village in its original environment. Surrounded by field, the original character of this village is enhanced by ancient church paths between the buildings on the museum grounds.

Between 500 BC and 1000 AD, villages developed on the Groningen terps. After the Wadden Coast was dyked in, terps became redundant and some were levelled off. Where terps were not levelled off, in many cases the village church was built on the highest point of the terp.



Niehove

In the area south of the Wadden sea which is now the Groningen mainland, used to be Frisian islands. Niehove was the main village of the Humsterland Frisian island. The village has retained its original structure and is an important place of interest for which it was crowned the Village of Tradition.

Museum Wierdenland



Wierdenland (Terp Area) museum is located on the outskirts of the terp village of Ezinge, and provides information about the history of the archaeological excavations carried out by Albert Eggen van Griffen around 1930. A walk through the village provides a good image of a village on a terp.

Reitdiep

The Reitdiepdal (valley) is Europe's oldest man-made landscape: water management, an age-old Dutch profession, has clearly left its traces here. The Drenthe Hunze river once flowed here, connecting the city of Groningen to the sea. As such a narrow, meandering river was difficult to sail, during the 17th century it was decided to partially straighten it. The Hunze is now called the Reitdiep. Fortunately, most old twists of the former Hunze remained.



Eenum

People already lived on the Eenum terp in 500 BC. The Roman church on the terp dates from the 12th century and has an Arp Schnitger organ from 1703. Just outside of the village is one of the highest terps in Groningen, the Eenumhoogte.

Museum Het Hoogeland



Het Hoogeland open-air museum shows a terp village in its original environs. Surrounded by field that have been there for centuries, the original character of the village is intensified by the old church paths between the dwellings on the museum grounds. With twenty buildings in het heart of Warffum, Het Hoogeland open-air museum shows how people used to live and work in the countryside a century ago.

Churches

The Groningen countryside is characterised by old churches. These historic places of worship with their austere architecture and modest interiors provide an image of the old days and some are internationally known: be sure to visit the tower that leans the most in Europe, which is located in Bedum.

The Der Aa church in Groningen city centre was probably built sometime around 1200 and is currently used for concerts, exhibitions, company dinners, fairs, weddings, receptions and parties.

The Martini church is the highlight of Groningen and is located on the Grote Markt. The Martini tower, referred to as Old Grey by Groningen residents, can be visited by individuals as well as groups. The tower owes its nickname to its grey colour. Including the spire, the tower is 97 metres high. Its foundation is a mere three metres deep and used to consist entirely of cowhides.

The leaning tower of Bedum

The Groningen churches are distinguished by their austere architecture, modest interiors and world-famous organs. The St. Walfridus church in Bedum stands out because of its leaning tower, which leans even more than the tower of Pisa. The church in Scheemda from 1515 is another jewel and was once used by the area residents as a refuge in the case of heavy weather and when the Dollard flooded.



The Old Groningen Churches Foundation

The Old Groningen Churches Foundation manages over sixty Groningen churches. By purchasing, renovating and maintaining these churches, the Foundation maintains this cultural heritage for Groningen as well as the access to the churches, the keys to which can often be obtained from the neighbours.

Art and culture in the churches

The Groningen churches are platforms for various events. Annually, KunstCircuit holds a series of 'visual presentations'. At the start of the summer, the Terug naar het Begin (Back to the Start) cultural festival takes place in the churches, and at the end of the summer there is the ZomerJazzFietsTour (SummerJazzBicycleTour).

Churchyards

Various Groningen churchyards have been entirely restored thanks to the 'Kerken in het groen' (Churches in Green) project. Groningen churchyards are special because of the many grave verses next to the names and dates on the tombstones. The Op Hoogte Gedacht project deals with visual art in churchyards, with the objective of focusing attention to the historic Groningen churchyards in a special way.



Groningen city

This is the bustling cultural heart of the province with attention for art and architecture, design and the Hanseatic trade league. There are friendly cafés and restaurants, wonderful theatres and high-profile festivals. The city centre has charming shopping streets and historical buildings tell their own particular story.



For centuries Groningen has been popular with students, both prospective and ex-students. Groningen has approximately 50.000 students in higher education and university out of a total population of 186.000. With around half under the age of 35.

Since the Groningen World exhibition in 1903, Groningen has remained a festival city, whether sports, pop music, classical music, or theatre, the international Film Festival Rotterdam in Groningen or Noorderlicht is concerned.

The Grote Markt



The Grote Markt square has a daily market except for Sunday and Monday, and with a large general goods market on Tuesday and Saturday. The Grote Markt square is also the starting and finishing point to wander through various lovely streets.